



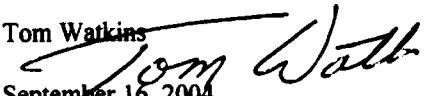
STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

TO: Local Education Agencies, Nonpublic Schools and Public School Academies

FROM: Tom Watkins 

DATE: September 16, 2004

SUBJECT: 57th Annual Michigan Youth in Government Program

On March 9-13, 2005 & April 13-17, 2005, 1600 Michigan high school students, teachers, YMCA leaders and government advisors will convene at the state capitol for the 57th annual Michigan YMCA Youth in Government Program. The program duplicates as nearly as practicable the state's political/government process. Students choose to be representatives and senators or serve as legislative support staff and members of the executive branch of government. They deliberate on proposed legislation, which they have written in their hometowns. The three and one half-day program is perhaps the best method for young people to understand the complexities of state government, and the qualities of principle centered leadership where the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility are taught.

This year, fall conferences are being held in September & October in Ishpeming, Mt. Pleasant, Portage and Livonia to prepare for the spring programs. In these sessions, the youth will elect a Speaker of the House, Lt. Governor, Freshman Speaker, Sophomore Lt. Governor and Chaplain to preside in Lansing. A youth Governor will also be elected in each district to run for election when all the groups convene in Lansing.

In addition to the legislative and executive branches, students may participate in the Model Judicial Program (MJP). Cases are tried using the mock court trial process, the same process used in law schools. The mock trial team from Coldwater High School won the state competition and also took second place at the ABA National Mock Trials this summer.

In the summer, the youth Governor will attend the National Youth Governors' Conference in Washington, D.C. and will have the opportunity to meet with the President, Cabinet Officers, Senators, Representatives, Supreme Court Justices, and other government officials. Students also have an opportunity to attend the YMCA's Conference on National Affairs held at Black Mountain, North Carolina.

Each high school in Michigan is invited to participate. Delegates are chosen by student councils or by government classes, YMCA's and other youth-serving agencies. Most schools begin their preparations early in the fall for the September and October fall conferences.

Also, a middle school Youth in Government Program began last year which is approximately the same process as the current high school program. The program will be held November 21-23, 2004, in Lansing. This is a good opportunity for middle school students to learn leadership skills and also how the democratic process works. Students are responsible to write a legislative bill and debate it in committee as well as in the House and Senate chambers in the Capitol Building.

I would urge your school district to participate in this outstanding program. Please make your initial arrangements for materials as soon as possible by contacting the office listed (see enclosed brochure). You will then be contacted directly and will be given all the information you need to get your students involved in this nationally recognized program. For questions, please contact the Youth in Government Organization at 517/639-4480, or by email at www.myig.org/.

Enclosure

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